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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 PARIS 001587

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL PBTS PHUM MOPS OSCE UNSC FR GG RU RS UN

SUBJECT: TFGG01: FRENCH EFFORTS TO RESOLVE CRISIS IN GEORGIA

REF: A. STATE 88235

1B. STATE 87254

1C. STATE 88216

1D. PARIS 01561

1E. PARIS POINTS FOR AUGUST 13

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Kathleen H. Allegrone. Reasons 1.4b,d

11. (C) Summary: Since President Sarkozy and Foreign Minister Kouchner met with Secretary Rice on August 14, President Sarkozy has maintained high-profile efforts to implement the Russia/Georgia six-point cease-fire accord he negotiated in his capacity as EU President -- especially the main point of contention, which is the fifth point that states "Russian military forces should withdraw to positions prior to the outbreak of hostilities" and that "while waiting for an international mechanism, Russian forces will implement additional security measures." In an opinion article published in Le Figaro August 18, Sarkozy stressed that if point 5 of the accord is not applied rapidly and completely, he will convene an extraordinary session of the European Council (EU Heads of State/Government) to decide on next steps. Following on guidance from Washington, Post has relayed demarche requests (see Refs A-C), including the request for additional OSCE monitors in Georgia. While much of the current focus is on NATO and the NAC, Sarkozy's optic is first and foremost the EU. France, as President of the EU, will also be turning its attention to the upcoming September 5-6 Gymnich, where EU-Russia relations will be prominently discussed, and the September 9 EU summit with Ukraine. End Summary.

12. (U) As of August 18, building on the Secretary's August 14 visit, the French have concentrated on establishing modalities for implementation of point 5 of the six-point cease-fire accord. On August 17, Sarkozy publicly released the text of his August 14 letter to Georgian President Saakashvili establishing such modalities, stemming from their August 12 meeting in Tbilisi. In the letter, Sarkozy stated that Saakashvili's signature of the accord would guarantee withdrawal of Russian forces, per Sarkozy's discussions with Russian President Medvedev. With respect to the presence of Russian troops, Sarkozy stressed that these additional security measures -- which would be Russian peacekeeping forces at a level authorized by existing agreements -- referred only to the immediate proximity of South Ossetia and not any other part of Georgian territory, including Gori.

13. (U) In his August 17 phone conversation with Medvedev, Sarkozy underlined that a signature by all parties of the six-point accord would have to translate into a withdrawal without delay of all Russian military forces in Georgia since

August 7, according to the French MFA and French media citing the Elysee. Otherwise, non-compliance on Russia's part would have a detrimental effect on its relations with the European Union. In the same conversation, the two heads of state agreed on the deployment of OSCE observers, and the French were hoping EU member states would make a decision today (August 18) to bring the total number of OSCE observers on the ground to 100. The two presidents also agreed to hold a phone conversation each day regarding implementation of the ceasefire. The GOF -- following on Medvedev's announcement that the withdrawal of Russian troops would begin on August 18 -- remains vigilant, especially regarding the access of humanitarian organizations to the civilian population.

¶4. (C) Recent French attempts build on last week's efforts by the GOF to achieve Sarkozy's primary goal of establishing a ceasefire in Georgia that would end hostilities and allow humanitarian assistance to flow into the country. During his negotiations with Russian President Medvedev and Prime Minister Putin in Moscow August 12, Sarkozy was unable to address issues of "territorial integrity" and "sovereignty" for Georgia.

¶5. (U) FM Kouchner, for his part, has been in close contact over the past few days with Secretary Rice, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov, NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, and the Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan, as well as with many of his counterparts in the European Union. He may also return to Georgia and Russia depending on how the situation evolves, but he has no firm plans or date in mind, according to the French MFA. Kouchner will also participate

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in the NAC tomorrow. The foreign minister previously had presided over the August 13 GAERC meeting in Brussels and there relayed the results of his visits in Tbilisi and Moscow, where, together with the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Finnish Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb, he had proposed a four-point plan of action. The Kouchner/Stubb original proposal did not include the specific language in the subsequent six-point plan that Sarkozy brokered on Russian military forces withdrawing to pre-hostilities locations, Russian peacekeeping forces, or opening of international talks on the security and stability arrangements in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. However, the current plan does match the Kouchner/Stubb original proposal in its first 4 points: (1) not to resort to force; (2) to end hostilities definitively; (3) to provide free access for humanitarian aid; and (4) the withdrawal of Georgian military forces to their usual bases.

¶6. (U) Following on last week's GAERC meeting, the French Presidency will work with the European Commission and with the Council secretariat on the accord regarding concrete steps for the Union to take that would result in a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict in Georgia. A working group was to begin meeting today at the MFA.

¶7. (U) Discussions at the UN Security Council toward adopting a resolution that will contribute to stabilizing the situation in Georgia continued to take place over the weekend, according to the French MFA. Negotiations on the text proposed by the French were to resume today.

¶8. (C) Following previous efforts (See Ref D), Post passed Georgia demarche points in Ref A on the afternoon of August 16 to MFA Continental Europe A/S equivalent Roland Galharague, who noted receipt of the points but was unable to provide immediately a substantive response.

¶9. (C) Regarding upcoming French EU Presidency initiatives and meetings, the head of the MFA's CFSP office, Patrick Maisonnave, on August 18 relayed to post the agenda for the upcoming Informal Foreign Ministers' Meeting (Gymnich) in Avignon, which will focus on (1) the Middle East peace process, (2) Georgia, EU/Russia relations, (3) a

revision of the European Security Strategy (Note: a long-standing French ESDP priority) and (4) Transatlantic relations. If time permits, the agenda also will include two more agenda items: Serbia and Afghanistan/Pakistan. The agenda could evolve between now and September 5-6.

¶10. (C) In addition, we understand Sarkozy and Kouchner recognize that the situation in Georgia -- particularly a lack of a solution in the region -- could spill over into problems for other former Soviet bloc countries in the region, including Ukraine. This issue probably will figure prominently at the EU/Ukraine Summit, which will take place on September 9 in Evian, according to the Ukrainian Embassy (See Ref E). The summit, held in the context of deepening EU/Ukraine relations, is intended to give a decisive boost to negotiations on a new enhanced agreement that began in 2007.

¶11. (SBU) Following is an informal Embassy translation of the six-point agreement on a Russian/Georgian cease-fire, as passed to the parties on 14 August 2008:

Begin text:

Agreed Protocol

¶1. No resort to force.

¶2. A definitive halt to hostilities.

¶3. Provision of free access for humanitarian assistance.

¶4. Georgian military forces must withdraw to the places they are usually stationed.

¶5. Russian forces must withdraw to their positions prior to the outbreak of hostilities. While awaiting an international mechanism, Russian peacekeeping forces will implement additional security measures.

¶6. Opening of international discussions on security and stability modalities in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

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For the European Union,
The French Presidency

s/s

Nicolas Sarkozy

End text

¶12. (U) Following is an informal Embassy translation of a statement and related documents released by the French presidency on Georgia, 17 August 2008:

INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF COMMUNIQUE AND RELATED DOCUMENTS
RELEASED BY THE FRENCH PRESIDENCY ON GEORGIA, 17 AUGUST 2008

Paris 16 August 2008

COMMUNIQUE

The Presidency of the Republic, out of concern for transparency, wishes to make public the letter that established precisely the modalities for the implementation of point 5 of the six-point cease-fire accord, stemming from President of the Republic Nicolas Sarkozy's 12 August meeting with Georgian President Mihail Saakashvili. This letter was addressed on August 14 to President Mihail Saakashvili.

Begin text:

Mister President:

Regarding point 5 of the six-point accord to which you)
after President Medvedev) gave your approval 12 August
during our meeting in Tbilisi, and which states that "Russian
military forces should withdraw to positions prior to the
outbreak of hostilities" and that "while waiting for an
international mechanism, Russian forces will implement
additional security measures," I wish to share with you the
following points for the sake of precision:

--As I made clear at our joint press conference in Tbilisi,
these "additional security measures" may only be implemented
in the immediate proximity of South Ossetia to the exclusion
of any other part of Georgian territory.

--More precisely, these "measures" may only be implemented
inside a zone of a depth of a few kilometers from the
administrative limit between South Ossetia and the rest of
Georgia in a manner such that no significant urban zone would
be included) I am thinking in particular of the city of
Gori. Special arrangements must be defined to guarantee the
liberty of movement and traffic along the length of the major
highways and railways of Georgia.

--These "additional security measures" will take the form of
patrols undertaken solely by Russian peacekeeping forces at a
level authorized by existing agreements, with other Russian
forces withdrawing to their positions prior to 7 August in
conformity with the agreed protocol;

--These "measures" will have a provisional character while
awaiting the establishment as quickly as possible of the
"international mechanism" whose nature and mandate are still
the subject of discussion by different international
entities, in particular the OSCE, the European Union, and the
United Nations.

Armed with these points of precision, I ask that you confirm
the agreement that you gave me and that you announced
publicly in Tbilisi while affixing your signature at the
bottom of the six-point agreed protocol that I had myself
signed as a witness and guarantor in the name of the European
Union. President Medvedev yesterday assured me that your
signature would lead to the withdrawal of Russian forces
pursuant to the accord concluded.

I ask that you accept, Mister President, the assurance of my
highest consideration.

s/s

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Nicolas Sarkozy

End text

The Presidency of the Republic wishes to add the three
following clarifications:

--In a letter accompanying the document relative to the
cease-fire, the territory mentioned includes the immediate
zone of conflict, as defined by prior arrangements, to the
exclusion of any other part of Georgian territory. The
measures defined by this document may only be implemented
within a zone of a depth of a few kilometers, around
Tskhinvali inside the zone of conflict.

--In no way will the measures mentioned in the letter be
allowed to limit or place in danger the freedom of movement
and of traffic along the length of the highways and railways
of Georgia.

--Other aspects of the process to resolve the conflict will
be discussed later.

End text

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<http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Portal:France>

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